



The University of Georgia
Cooperative Extension
College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences

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COTTON PEST MANAGEMENT NEWSLETTER #5

COTTON SITUATION: The Georgia Weekly Crop Progress and Condition Report for the week ending June 29th listed the crop as 56 percent squaring and 7 percent setting bolls which is similar to the 5 year averages of 60 percent and 13 percent respectively. Soil moisture conditions were rated at 33% very short, 38% short, 28% adequate, and 1% surplus. Crop conditions vary depending on rainfall and irrigation, where adequate moisture has been received crop growth and development appears good. USDA recently estimated that GA producers planted 900,000 acres of cotton in 2008, 130,000 acres less than 2007.

INSECT SITUATION: Aphid populations have significantly increased in southwest Georgia, no reports of the fungus which causes aphid populations to crash has been reported. Tobacco budworm moths are being observed in high numbers. We would anticipate increased corn earworm activity in the coming weeks. Stink bugs continue to be observed at high numbers in various crops.

Aphids: Aphid infestations significantly increased in several southwest Georgia counties; heavy accumulations of honeydew have been reported in some fields. In central and east Georgia aphid infestations are sporadic but tend to be increasing. Research conducted in Georgia during the past 10 years does not show a consistent yield response when aphids are controlled. However, each year there are fields which would probably benefit from an aphid insecticide application. Aphids are a stress inducing pest, feeding on plant juices. Very high aphid infestations can slow plant growth, especially when plants are under other stresses (i.e. moisture stress). Removal of the stress associated with a heavy aphid infestation may help plants endure other stresses. In fields heavily infested with aphids, scouts should be observant for gray, fuzzy aphid cadavers which are indicative of the naturally occurring fungus which causes aphid populations to crash. Once aphid fungus activity is observed in a field, we would expect the aphids to crash within a week.

Tobacco Budworm (TBW): TBW moth and egg lay is high in some areas of the state. Bt cotton should provide excellent control of TBW. Non-Bt cotton which is being managed for insect pests should be scouted closely for eggs and small larvae. TBW insecticide applications in non-Bt cotton must be well timed, targeting small larvae, to achieve good control. Growers must react to scouting reports within 24 hours. Control of large TBW larvae will be difficult. TBW is resistant to pyrethroids and non-pyrethroid insecticides such as Tracer, Steward, or Denim should be used for control of TBW.

Corn Earworm (CEW): CEW pheromone trap captures began increasing this week in Tifton. In most years we observe increased CEW activity in cotton as corn begins to dry down.

Supplemental treatment of CEW with pyrethroids is sometimes needed in Bt cotton. CEW infestations in Bt cotton are most often observed on fruiting forms just below the uppermost white bloom. Be sure to monitor blooms, bloom tagged bolls, and small bolls for larvae.

Stink Bugs: As cotton begins setting bolls, stink bug scouting and management should be a priority. To date, the majority of stink bugs we have observed have been brown stink bugs, but the percentage southern green stink bugs appear to be increasing. Scouts should be observant for stink bugs when walking fields (also a good idea to use a drop cloth) to get an estimate of the stink bug species composition. Depending on the species makeup, insecticide selection will vary. OP insecticides such as Bidrin and methyl parathion provide good control of brown stink bugs; whereas pyrethroids provide fair control of brown stink bug (increasing pyrethroid rates will improve control). The OP insecticides and pyrethroids both provide good control of southern green stink bug. In situations where threshold levels of brown stink bug and CEW infest cotton, a tank-mix of an OP plus a pyrethroid will be needed.

INSECT UPDATES: Check the **Cotton Insect Hotline (1-800-851-2847)** for updates on current insect conditions. The Cotton Pest Management Newsletter and additional cotton production information is also posted on the UGA Cotton Homepage at: <http://www.ugacotton.com>

Sincerely,

Phillip Roberts
Extension Entomologist

Putting knowledge to work

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